Melody Ayres-Griffiths' Early-Intermediate Piano Folios

Volume I

The Ladybug's Dance

Contents:

The Tiny Ballerina	2
The Cheery Locomotive	6
Billy Bear's Boogie	8
Sombre Siesta	12
Awake	14
I'm Smilin' Again	18
The Ladybug's Dance	20
A Minor Diversion	24
Stray Cat Strut	26
Mountain Burro Ride	30
The Faerie's Gift	32

Contents © 2010 Melody Ayres-Griffiths Pty. (Australia)
All Rights Reseved. Public Performance Permitted.

The Tiny Ballerina

©2010 Melody Ayres-Griffiths




32
f
37
42
cresc.
p
47
mp
mf
Ped.
52
57
rit.
p

Did you like *The Tiny Ballerina*? It's best played slowly and carefully, like a music box – the fingering can be a bit tricky in places as well, especially around bar 21.

Play it again, but ignore my notes of expression. Would you change the volume in different places, and place emphasis differently to what I've set out? If so, play it that way from now on! You're not a player-piano – you're a performer, and the audience isn't going to appreciate the piece you play unless you're passionate about it!

Later pieces in this folio do not have much in the way of expressive marks – I want you to have the freedom to 'explain' the songs in your own way, accentuating the way that they make you feel.

However, let's go back to the music at hand. *The Tiny Ballerina* demonstrates a few basic melodic concepts. Bars 3 and 4 are the 'question', and 5 and 6 are the 'answer', for example. Bar 11 is a question, and bar 12 is the answer. Think of two mountaineers yodelling. One yodels a question, and the other replies. This is a very basic melodic formula.

We also have a verse, bars 3 to 10, and a chorus, bars 11 through 18. 19 through 26 is a rephrasing of the verse, and 27 to 34 a rephrasing of the chorus. This is then followed by an interlude, or what is sometimes known as a 'bridge', which is made up of a contrasting series of 'accidental' chords.

In the following piece, *The Cheery Locomotive*, there is a similar structure, although a bit more complex. Bar 2 is the question, and bar 3 is the answer. Bars 2 to 4 are our verse, and bars 5 and 6 are our chorus. This repeats, and then repeats again.

The verse and the chorus are noted to be played in different styles. The verse is intended to be played in 'swing-time', where the first eighth note in a tuplet is played a bit longer than the second. Sometimes you're meant to figure these timings out for yourself, but in this case I've scored the music with the 'swing-time' already accounted for, as you will note in the left-hand score.

The chorus, on the other hand, is meant to be played in strict time, and grandiosely, as noted by the expression **Broadly**. There are triplets here, in bars 6 and 10 – these are played 3 to 2, that is three quarter notes with the right hand in the same time as two notes on the left. You might need to practice this for a while in order to get it down correctly. Note that the second time you play the repeated part (bars 2 to 11) you are meant to play it *staccato*. Each note should only be held briefly before releasing it, as if tapping.

The right hand part in bars 20 through 25 are arpeggiated, that is, they are to be played as if every note in each chord is a grace note in front of it. Simply put, press down your thumb first, and roll your hand to the right to play the other notes, but keep the keys pressed down and don't release them until the chord comes to an end.

The Cheery Locomotive

©2010 Melody Ayres-Griffiths




13
sfz
mp
16
20
p
Broadly
24
mp
3
Swing
p
Broadly
28
mf
3
Swing
f
sfz

Billy Bear's Boogie

©2010 Melody Ayres-Griffiths




25
29
33
37
41
46

Billy Bear's Boogie is precisely that, Boogie Woogie which, as you've likely already discovered, is quite ponderous to play (although fun!). The point here is to play the piece primarily as fast and as loud as possible – and with some measure of accuracy.

The repeated left hand movement will find you getting tired easily, so you should set aside a little time every time you practice to work on your left hand, or more specifically your left wrist's strength.

You may find the rhythm of the right hand a bit troublesome at first – if you do, simply sound out the rhythm on the piano keyboard by only playing middle C with the right hand, and the C one octave lower with the left:

Right: *C* *C* *C*
Left: *C* *C* *C* *C*

Right: *C* *C* *C*
Left: *C* *C* *C* *C*

I haven't provided any fingering here as most of it ought to be obvious. In measure 7, see if you can work out how to play this bar by placing your hand in one position and keeping it there! In measure 9, note that the F is present in each chord, so you pivot your hand back and forth, moving the thumb and the little finger to the right and back to the left in sequence.

The key here is practice, practice, practice!

In the following piece, *Sombre Siesta*, I've created a two-handed accompaniment whereby the first three eighth-notes are played by the left in this ¾ time piece, and the second three notes are played by the right.

When the melody is introduced in measure 5, it is played by the right hand *in addition to* the already introduced accompaniment, creating a right hand *polyphony*.

Pay careful attention to measure 8. The thumb needs to get that B below middle C, and then the right hand needs to track its way up to get the C/E above middle C in bar 9.

In measure 17 I note *decres* – decrescendo. Not only should you gradually back down on the volume, but you may wish to *ritardando* – or gradually slow in tempo. Although unstated, one should return to tempo after the end of the dotted underscore above the measures.

Measure 30 is tricky; you need to pass your fingers over your thumb on your right hand in order to transition down an octave, but be wary of the left hand's need to play the F sharp in the same sequence. Starting in bar 31 the last three groups of 8th notes in each measure are to be played *staccato*, but the first dotted quarter note is to be played *legato*, or held.

There are *fermatas* in bar 36 and at the end of the piece at 41. Hold these notes as long as you wish.

Sombre Siesta

©2010 Melody Ayres-Griffiths



With Feeling



Awake

©2010 Melody Ayres-Griffiths




24
I don't wake up a- ny day, I'm just this way!
28
I would love no- thing bet- ter than to wake up like all of you, but I know
32
D.C. al Coda
that's just not gon- na hap- pen; it's not some- thing I'll ev- er do-- wake- ful- ness...
36
Coda
I did not wake up to- day, I'm sad to say,
40
I don't wake up a- ny day, I'm just this way!
Repeat and Rit.

Awake is a sad piano/vocal piece in A Minor. See if you can sing along with it while you play it. The top staff is the vocal melody, and the bottom two staffs are the piano accompaniment.

In bars 6, 10, 21 and so on, you'll notice that the right hand plays a low note that the left hand would have played as part of the accompaniment. I've scored it so that the right hand plays it in order to keep track of the melody; however, you can play it with your left hand if you prefer.

In bars 13 and 17 the right hand plays the same note the left hand does, immediately after the left hand plays it. The trick here is to pull the left hand away from the keyboard right after playing the note, to get out of the way. If you use the sustain pedal, you can make it appear seamless.

Triplets abound in our 'bridge', measures 28 through 35. In this case, these are effectively 6 8th notes against 4, if you look at them that way it can be easier to get the timing correct.

This song also includes this book's first use of *D.C . al Coda,* which means "go back to the beginning, and play it all the way through until it says *to Coda* (in this case at the end of measure 19), and then play the bit at the end marked ***Coda***.

The *Coda* directs you to repeat it once, and then *ritardando* the second time around – gradually slow down as if a train coming to rest at the station.

The following piece, *I'm Smilin' Again*, is also composed in a vocal 'mode', but has no formal lyrics. See if you can make some up!

I originally wrote this with the left hand repeating the 'boppy' syncopated pattern throughout, but found that it was rather tiresome, and so I re-wrote it into its present form.

As with *Awake* there are no fingerings – you ought to be able to work them out yourself, but there are a few places I should mention. In measure 2, it's probably best to play the B-flat with your ring finger. The first chord in measure 9 should be played with your thumb, your index finger and your ring finger, playing the two successive chords with your little finger. Finally, in measure 51 you'll need to cross your left-hand thumb over for the final note to finish out the piece with your little finger.

Also common with the previous piece is it has minimal expression marks. Try increasing and decreasing volume where you feel it's appropriate. Think one section should be faster than another? That's totally up to you. Experimentation is the key here.

The interlude from measures 29 through 42 require a great deal of right-hand movement; you may benefit from practicing your C-major scale several times before attempting to play this piece because of that. Ragtime pieces tend to have similar amounts of right-hand movement.

I'm Smilin' Again

(c) 2010 Melody Ayres-Griffiths

Boppy

Piano




28
32
36
40
Gradually ritard
mf
and diminsh to end
44
47
51

The Ladybug's Dance

©2010 Melody Ayres-Griffiths



Grandly





Playfully









Fingerings and expression marks are back in *The Ladybug's Dance* as some parts of this piece are quite tricky – but once again, you can feel free to play it how you like. It's a very inspiring tune, and the verse is a great demonstration of what can be done with very limited right-hand movement.

I suggest that you play the repeat of bars 5 through 27 one octave higher, as noted by the *repeat 8va* instruction. Be aware that when you revisit this section for the third time, it should be played as normal.

Any repeat of any song can be played an octave higher. Try it with some other pieces you know. It's a great technique to revitalise tunes that have become tired. Syncopating pieces can also really spice things up! Try syncopating ('swinging') *The Ladybug's Dance*. Do you like it? Why or why not? I love to swing *Fur Elise*. I recommend you try it.

D.S. al Coda indicates that you should go back to the indicated symbol – the S with a / through it – and play from there until *To Coda* at the end of bar 27, at which point you should go to *Coda* at measure 35. The *8va* over bars 35 through 38 indicates those bars should be played one octave higher.

There is some tricky left-hand work during our interlude at bars 28 through 34. The little finger and thumb do all the work! This might require some practice to get it right – especially the flats – but I'm confident you'll get it eventually. *Practice!*

The next piece, *A Minor Diversion*, is more of a technical one, with an emphasis on left hand rhythm, which you will find in the remaining songs in this folio.

The first two introductory measures have a somewhat complicated rhythm which once again can be conquered by simply playing out the timing on two notes, one for each index finger, one octave apart. Once you have it down, then try to play the notes proper.

Measures 11 through 18 can seem a bit tricky at first, but try practicing with each hand separately before trying to play them together, and you should have them down in no time.

Bars 19 through 22 place the two hands right next to each other, and your two thumbs vie for the same note at the start of each phrase. It's a bit of a juggling act, but ought not to be too difficult – assuming you have your cadence steady.

There are no expression marks here, so you are free to play this however you like, although I would suggest the chorus at bar 11 be played quietly, as if a pause in the 'action' of the rest of the piece. You might have a different interpretation – that's just fine.

Once you have the various phrases down, try playing them in random places on the keyboard. Do any of these appeal to you? String them together to create your own Minor Diversion!

A Minor Diversion

©2010 Melody Ayres-Griffiths




16
19
22
25
27

Stray Cat Strut

©2010 Melody Ayres-Griffiths





Stray Cat Strut demonstrates that chord changes in the left hand can be just as effective musically as changes in the right. In this case, the left hand moves and the right hand stays put, but your ear still hears the change equally as effectively as if this situation was reversed, as it is in most music that favours the treble over the bass.

There are no expression marks here, either – although you'll quickly get the impression that this piece wants to 'swing', and that it does! Take out a pencil and start drawing in your personal choices of crescendos and decrescendos, loudness, staccato, sustain, *8va*, *8vb* (one octave lower) and so forth.

There is no such thing as sanctity in jazz arrangement – the performer is always free to do what she wants to any piece.

Once again, *you are not a player piano!*

Bars 17 through 23, and 40 through 46 are somewhat complicated by the run of right-hand chords but can be simplified by saving your thumb for the second and third chords of each block of 4 – the first chord is on the 'right' of your right-hand, the second and third chord is on the left of your right-hand, the fourth is on the left, and so forth.

Bars 24 through 39 serve as a contrary 'response' to the initial verse. If you'd like, you can mix up these two phrases together in a 'challenge-response' sort of arrangement.

Mountain Burro Ride is the sort of Spanish-influenced song you would hear in an old Hollywood western. The highlight of this piece is once again the left-hand rhythm, and its movement is quite tricky in places, especially when it moves up and down an octave in measures 17 through 21.

I strongly recommend you play the bass part a few times before introducing the treble, although the right-hand part is not that sophisticated, consisting primarily of simple chords that are re-arranged. There are a couple of octave-spanning chords in measure 8 – if you have a problem with these, simply chop off the head or the tail of them. Your choice.

The last piece in this folio is entitled *The Faerie's Gift*. Don't be too horrified when you see the key – A-flat minor (yes, yes, we all get the joke!) – every note is played flat unless otherwise specified, kind of a 'reverse' C-major scale.

Andante Cantabile means '*Take your time!*' This is meant to be played quite slowly. The polyphony is rather complex, so it's more important to get the notes right than to play it quickly. Also, don't try to learn this all at once – play a couple of bars here and there until you become comfortable with the key; then you'll find it's much easier to 'switch gears' into it.

I hope you've found this folio enjoyable, and wish you the best of luck in your piano studies. Cheers!

Mountain Burro Ride

©2010 Melody Ayres-Griffiths





The Faerie's Gift

©2010 Melody Ayres-Griffiths




11
13
mf
15
mp
17
mf
19
mp
21
p
pp
ppp



Contact the author at:
melodyayresgriffiths@gmail.com